

SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURRENT TOPICS—COMPILED EVERY DAY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

Radical Exultation at Virginia's Degradation.

From the N. Y. Herald. On the morning of the first day of election in Louisiana under the reconstruction laws, we warned the radicals that the success of their policy in the South would be more than balanced by decisive defeats at the North. We told them that their shouts of exultation at the degradation of white men would be responded to by the Great West in such language as would unmistakably inform the world whether our recent war was fought for the preservation of the Union, or for the aggrandizement of negroes and the enslavement of our own race.

It seems, however, that the Republican party is utterly doomed, and that nothing can stay its approaching dissolution. The negro organ in this city, unable to repress its joy at the success of the recent disgusting spectacle in Virginia, cannot be content with the editorial recently, in which the degradation of the Old Dominion was made the subject of undisguised pleasure and satisfaction. Do the radical leaders think that the masses of the Republican party sympathize with them? Do they imagine how many of their old political associates exclaimed, when the result was announced, "God help the Old Commonwealth!" Perhaps they do not. It may be necessary that the votes of the State of New York shall be counted to-morrow, before the fact of how positively they have played into the hands of their opponents becomes fully evident. But even as we warned them before, so do we warn them again. Virginia, rebellious and defiant, excited our anger and called for punishment from us; but Virginia, loyal and submissive, has our warmest sympathies. In no manner and form do the people of the North regard the recent election in that State as a triumph of loyalty and a defeat of treason. They see in it only the degradation of a member of this Union, who, from the establishment of our independence, has been endeared to us by a thousand noble and heroic associations. The disgusting spectacle of negroes voting like so many mechanical beings; the keeping of polls open day after day, and night after night, for the expressed purpose of ensuring a radical success; the election to office of such men as Hunnicutt and his gang of negro Constitution makers; the antagonism of the two races as developed in the solid manner in which they cast their votes, and the rude and defiant conduct of the blacks, excite our earnest fears and sympathies—fears, because from all these things we see another irrepressible conflict arising, and sympathies, because the defeated party is composed solely of men of our own race and of the intelligence and civilization of the State.

What, then, must follow these radical exultations at Virginia's degradation? The question is easily answered. Ohio and Pennsylvania will be repeated; the people will come to the rescue of the country. False to the avowed principles on which it triumphed last fall, the Republican party has forfeited the confidence of the people and must be removed from power. The era of fanatical doctrines and Utopian theories is coming to an end; and perhaps that it is nothing but poetic justice that Virginia should give them the last blow. Upon her soil was performed the tragedy which placed the Republican party in power; and it looks very much as if the conclusion of the farce of this week will be followed by the dropping of the curtain upon all that remains of a once powerful organization.

Austria and the Concordat.

From the N. Y. Herald. According to the Vienna correspondence of the London Morning Herald, even Transylvania, that ultima Thule of the Austrian monarchy, has sent up a petition to the Reichsrath for setting aside the concordat. This concordat, or treaty, was made by the See of Rome with Austria in 1855, after Hungary had been crushed and Francis Joseph had revoked the constitutional privileges which his uncle had been forced to concede. The provisions of the concordat are now felt to be onerous, even by the sluggish Austrian mind, which has been slowly awakening to a sense of its natural rights ever since the battle of Sadowa dated the period of transition through which Austria is now passing from "a despotism that aimed at supremacy over a vast variety of incongruous and alien provinces by the agency of a great army, a skillful bureaucracy, and, it must in fairness be added, of a kind of hazy benevolence," to the experiment of constitutional government. The Transylvanian petition against the concordat is characterized by a primitive simplicity in the diction not generally to be found in such documents. In alluding to the imperfect state of the schools, it says that "at the annual examinations the best children are able to give an account of how things looked in heaven; they know the names of the principal angels, the number of the saints, and they know something about hell and purgatory, and of the torments of the damned. But how things looked in their own land, what it produces, and what might be produced better and cheaper, what is exported, etc., of all this they know nothing." Thus, in Transylvania, as in other parts of the empire—and from all parts similar petitions have been presented to the Emperor—there is a growing demand for something better and more in conformity with the actual political changes which are taking place than the old doctrine which is prevalent whenever and wherever ecclesiastical authority is supreme, and predicts anarchy, impiety, social and political ruin as the inevitable consequence of any attempt to subvert or weaken it. Of course the latter view is taken by the majority of the clerical party, naturally jealous of innovation, and anxious to maintain the privilege conferred upon the hierarchy by the concordat. Twenty-five archbishops and bishops have presented a petition to the Emperor in favor of the concordat, asserting that either the rights of the clergy must be upheld or the principles of revolution acknowledged. On the school question they say:—"It is not better instruction which is wanted. What is desired is to attack religion and morality. It is wished to make the school serve to propagate unbelief." Again they say:—"As to what this miserable screaming against

the concordat betokens no one can any longer doubt. It means we will have marriage without solidity and holiness, and schools without religion and moral earnestness." The bishops tell his Majesty the Emperor that "they consider it impossible that a son of the exalted house which God has called to govern Austria should ever so far forget his mission, and the example of his ancestors, as to turn the rights which are given him against the Church of God." Happily, the Emperor in his reply showed that he had a clearer and truer sense of the changed condition of things, and of his own responsibilities and duties in view of it, than his clerical advisers. He reminded them distinctly of the fact—which they had seemed to forget—that he is now "a constitutional prince as well as a true son of the Church." The Reichsrath has shown that it is likewise in unison with the modern spirit of progress by appealing to the Pope to sanction such modifications of the concordat as shall harmonize with the response which it has itself made to the popular demand for the repeal of the concordat. Now that such a demand has become almost universal in Austria, and especially now that railway enterprise is beginning to animate Hungary, and bids fair to extend beyond its limits, it is not extravagant to hope that even Austria will at length lay aside every weight and run successfully the race that is set before her, as well as before the other nations of modern Europe.

The Alliance Between Prussia and Italy.

From the N. Y. Tribune. During the past few days we have had several cable despatches announcing a serious change in the diplomatic relations between France and Italy. The Paris Monitor has officially declared that Louis Napoleon regards the marching of Italian troops into the Papal territory as a violation of the September Convention, and has on that account demanded an explanation from the Italian Government. The new Prime Minister of Italy, Menabrea, charges, in turn, France with violating the Convention, and, if the cable despatch in our issue of Monday morning correctly represents his views, expressly admits that the movement of the Italian troops has taken place in consequence of the violation of the treaty by France. Finally, a semi-official paper of Berlin makes the important declaration that Prussia will interfere in the Roman question, should such action on her part be necessary for preserving the peace of Europe. Thus, supposing the cable not to have misrepresented the meaning of these official and semi-official utterances, we have declarations of a very warlike character from each of the three courts of Paris, Florence, and Berlin.

If, contrary to the indications which we have been receiving during the past two weeks, the Italian Government has made up its mind to put itself at the head of the nation and resist the demands of France, it has undoubtedly received the strongest assurances of help from Prussia. It was natural that both Prussia and Italy, and especially the latter, should proceed with the utmost caution and reserve in the formation of an alliance against France. An alliance against France is a much more serious matter than an alliance against Austria. Against Austria the allied Governments in 1856 felt no doubt as to the issue of the war. The weak points of their enemy were too well known, and neither Prussia nor Italy stood in fear of future revenge on the part of Austria.

France is a much more formidable opponent, and is recognized as such by both Prussia and Italy. In a single-handed war against France Italy had reason to fear that she would be crushed. Prussia, though aided by the forces of South Germany, would at least have a difficult stand. Both Governments would have been grateful to Louis Napoleon had he allowed them to finish the work of national unification without hindrance. But Napoleon clings to the determination to prevent if possible the annexation of Rome and the entry of the South German States into the North German Parliament. His opposition to Italian unity has just again officially declared his opposition to German unity he has of late on several occasions seemed to disown, in order to prevent, if possible, a Prusso-Italian alliance. But Bismark, by his foreign policy, clearly shows that he has never doubted that he can complete the work of German unity only at the risk of a French war. He has long urged Italy to strengthen her old alliance with Prussia, and to concert with Prussia the simultaneous consummation of the national unity of both countries. The history of the past few months, though as yet but imperfectly known, contains many indications of the efforts of Prussia on behalf of a renewal of the Prusso-Italian alliance. Italy has shown a natural fear to openly commit herself. A few more days will reveal to what extent the Italian Government is willing to cooperate with Bismark.

The Roman Question.

From the N. Y. World. We are told in the latest cable despatches that Garibaldi and his forces, from ten to twelve thousand strong, are at and about the village of Monte Rotondo, within sight of Rome, to which all the Papal troops had retired; that the French troops having landed at Civita Vecchia, had marched to and entered the Holy City; that a detachment of the Italian army, under command of General Cialdini, had crossed the Roman frontier; and that General Menabrea, Prime Minister of Italy, justifies, in a note, this movement, by saying that "the violation of the September treaty by the French required it." It was previously explained that the action of Garibaldi required it, and that the Italian regulars were marching, not to watch or threaten the French army, but rather to cooperate with it in repelling the "Liberator's" advance. This note indicates on its face that Victor Emmanuel may yet find an excuse for complying with the will of the Italian people rather than with the terms of the September convention. All advice from Italy go to prove that many eminent conservatives have been stung by the arrogant demands of Napoleon, and induced by the prevailing enthusiasm to consent that the Roman question should be settled, if possible, now and forever, as the people wish it to be settled. There is no evidence that the first intention of the Government to "put down" Garibaldi meets with the approval of a minority large enough to be depended upon. The feeling is very decided against another French occupation of Rome; and, weak as Italy is, the masses of the nation appear to be willing to fight France forthwith if Florence is necessary. A recent letter from the London Times describes the growth and extent of this feeling, and says that Prince Humbert, the heir apparent to the throne, sympathizes with it so far that he refused the command of the army, under Cialdini, which was then being prepared to operate against Garibaldi's volunteers. Rumors were also current in Florence that

the insurgents had received direct material aid from Prussia in the form of needle-guns and other munitions of war. A cable telegram of Saturday announces what has been daily expected, but what still needs confirmation, that a crisis has been brought about in the relations of France and Prussia, which may seriously affect the settlement of the question now pending between Italy and the former power.

The Suffrage Question Again—The View of a Radical Upon It.

From the N. Y. Times. It is very evident that the radical leaders intend to commit the Republican party to the new doctrine of national suffrage, and thus to force it upon the country. The pretentious pronouncements of Mr. Sumner, the passionate demands of Wendell Phillips, the ground taken and the language used by the Tribune, the Washington Chronicle, and other radical organs, leave no room to doubt that Congress will be called on to enact a law stripping the States of all control over the suffrage, and declaring who may and who may not vote in every State of the Union. And, of course, the first effort will be to force this upon the Republican party, and compel every one who desires to rank as a "good Republican," and to escape condemnation as a Copperhead or Rebel, to give it his support. The ground on which Mr. Stevens attempts to base this movement is simply absurd. He asserts that "the elective franchise ranks with life and liberty in its sacred, inalienable character"—that the authors of the Declaration of Independence so regarded it, and that our fathers "intended" to create a continental empire, based upon that principle. As a matter of historical fact, this assertion is utterly untrue. There is not a particle of evidence to show that the framers of our Government had any such intentions, or held any such opinions. Every form of proof, everything they did, wrote, and said, contradicts and refutes this false assumption. Everything shows that the Declaration was not intended to lay the foundation of any specific government at all, but only to set forth the principles on which we were to be governed. The Declaration was not intended to create a continental empire, but only to declare that the first Government formed after independence was achieved—that of the Confederation—made not the slightest attempt to restrict the control of the States over the question of suffrage. And when that form was found defective, its defects had nothing to do with the suffrage—they related wholly to other questions; and in the new Constitution, which was ordained to form a "more perfect union," the control of the suffrage was expressly confirmed to the States. The qualifications for voting for national officers were declared to be such as the States should prescribe for voting for members of the most numerous branch of their own Legislatures. These acts, which were deliberate and explicit, prove the intentions of the actors to have been precisely the opposite of those which Mr. Stevens sees fit to ascribe to them. And he cannot find in their words, in their writings, or in their speeches, anything to give color of warrant to his assertion that they "intended" to do anything different from what they actually did.

But Mr. Stevens' position is not only historically false, it is intrinsically absurd. If "the elective franchise ranks with life and liberty in its sacred, inalienable character," as he says it does, then it must rank with them also in its universality. Every human being who has an inalienable right to "life and liberty," must also have an inalienable right to the elective franchise. No limitations can be annexed to one, which do not belong to the other. Now, life and liberty belong, as "sacred, inalienable rights," to women and children, as well as to men, to aliens and "Indians not taxed," as well as to citizens; would Mr. Stevens insist that the elective franchise belongs to them, in the same way and by the same title? He would probably say that a limit must be fixed somewhere for the sake of good government; but in so saying he surrenders the whole argument. He concedes that the elective franchise does not "rank with life and liberty in its sacred, inalienable character," because that can be limited and modified from the issue of expediency, while they cannot. That may be taken away from certain great classes of human beings, at the mere will of the sovereign political society—while they cannot. That may be denied to all the women and all the children—more than four-fifths of all the people, in any nation—but who would dream of denying "life and liberty" to either class?

Mr. Stevens' proposition, therefore, the abstract principle on which he builds his scheme of government, is not new, reconstructed continental empire, it is not true. The elective franchise is not an inalienable right, belonging to every human being. And if it is not that, it is not an inalienable right belonging naturally to any, for there can be no such thing as natural rights belonging to one class of human beings that do not belong to all. The only thing which makes them natural rights is the fact that they do belong to all. The idea of a sacred, inalienable, natural right belonging to a man and not to a woman—belonging to a man the day after he is twenty-one, and not the day before—is an absurdity. The elective franchise is a political power, created by political society; by the organized, established government; as a right it exists only as the right to exercise that power; and that right is conferred by the government which creates the power.

When Mr. Stevens says, therefore, that this sacred, inalienable right of voting, was "suspended," "bartered away for the time being," by the Constitution of the United States, he talks nonsense. Never having existed as a right, it could not, of course, have been bartered away. The framers of the Constitution never dreamed of "suspending this as one of the attributes of liberty," partly, perhaps, because a "suspended attribute" was something never heard of in those early days, but mainly because they did not recognize its existence as a natural and inalienable right. What the framers of the Constitution actually did was to designate the political authority by which, under the form of government to be thus established, the right of voting should be conferred. And they decided that this right should remain with the States. They placed that decision, in clear, distinct, and unmistakable language, in the clauses of the Constitution. Instead of "dealing" to decide differently, no serious proposition to do so was ever made. No one of the fathers of the republic ever intended such a purpose, such a preference, or such a wish as Mr. Stevens unhesitatingly ascribes to them all—to take from the States and give to Congress control of the suffrage question throughout the Union. The assumption is purely gratuitous. The argument, if a bald, unsupported assertion can be called an argument, is what we have already described it—purely a figment of Mr. Stevens' imagination. Having thus shown, as we claim, that "the elective franchise," as one of the "inalienable rights of man," was suspended by the arbitrary Constitution of 1787, Mr. Stevens next pro-

ceeds to show that this suspension "has been removed, so as to leave our hands unrestrained in restoring its full vigor," by the amendment adopted in 1865. Here is what he says on that point:—

"The fourteenth amendment, now so happily adopted, settles the whole question, and places every American citizen on a perfect equality of rights, so far as natural and national rights and questions are concerned. It declared that all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States, and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges and immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any person be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; nor shall any person within its jurisdiction be denied the equal protection of the law."

"If by the amended Constitution every American citizen is entitled to equal privileges with every other American citizen, and if every American citizen in any one of the States should be found entitled to impartial suffrage with every other American citizen in any State, then it follows as a matter of course, that suffrage throughout this nation is impartial and universal, so far as every human being without regard to race or color is concerned, and so far as it affects the whole nation."

"Can he who swears to support the Constitution in all its parts refuse to aid in carrying this into effect without clear, direct perjury? A worse perjury than would have been committed by those who under the old Constitution, could not agree to that Constitution, and thus refused their aid to their fellow-men."

"If every citizen of any State is entitled to the same rights, privileges, and immunities of this Government, and if one of those inalienable rights is the right to elect his fellow-citizens, and if to take part in the Government, show me the man who is so impudent as to deny that suffrage by the ballot is due to every being within its realm to whom God has given intellect. He must be an impudent citizen, and ought never to profess to believe in the existence of a Deity; for the denial of every man the right to vote without an overruling cause is more feasible than such a proposition."

We will not stop to examine Mr. Stevens' notions of perjury, nor his ideas about the Deity, or the "creation of a world without an overruling cause." Both seem to be about as muddled and confused as his notions of the early history of our Government and his ideas of natural right. But Mr. Stevens is by no means the first—and we have no right to suppose he will be the last—of our public men who mistake words for ideas, and sounding phrases about the objects and ends of government for sound and feasible measures of legislation. We cannot prevent him from imposing upon himself by such tricks of rhetoric; all we can hope to do is, by exposing them, to prevent his imposing upon others.

The fourteenth amendment, which Mr. Stevens quotes, has nothing whatever to do, directly or indirectly, with the suffrage question. It relates wholly to the question of civil rights, and has no exclusive object was to secure an absolute equality of civil rights to all people in the United States, without distinction of race or color. A previous attempt had been made to do this by law; but the constitutionality of such a law was denied in some quarters and doubted in others; and to put this matter beyond doubt, this amendment was introduced, passed, and ratified by the requisite number of States. Nobody in Congress pretended that it had anything whatever to do with the suffrage question. Nobody claimed or believed that it conferred the right of voting upon anybody, or that it affected in the slightest degree the absolute control over that subject already vested in the States. Mr. Stevens made no such pretense. Mr. Wilson, of Iowa; Mr. Boutwell, of Massachusetts; Mr. Williams, of Pennsylvania—all the leading radicals in the House, indeed all the men of all parties—either expressly admitted or tacitly assented to the admission that it did not touch the suffrage, or any other political right or franchise, in the slightest degree. The claim which Mr. Stevens now brings forward is an afterthought. It is a view never before taken by him or by any one else. It is just as pure and groundless an invention as his assertion about the fathers of the republic.

The language of the amendment vindicates fully this view of its meaning. It relates wholly to civil rights—to an equality of rights before the law. It prohibits a State from making laws which shall "abridge the privileges and immunities" belonging to citizens, as citizens of the United States. But the privilege of voting is not among them. That is conferred, according to the Constitution, by the authority of the States alone.

The argument of Mr. Stevens on this point is this:—(1) Every American citizen is entitled to equal privileges with every other American citizen; (2) In some one State every American citizen may be entitled to the privilege of voting; (3) Consequently every citizen may be entitled to the same privileges in every State. "It follows," he says, "as an inevitable conclusion, that suffrage throughout this nation is impartial and universal." Mr. Stevens certainly has very queer notions of an "inevitable conclusion." Suppose an American citizen should be found in some one State to have the privilege of establishing a bank, or making a railroad; by the fourteenth constitutional amendment every American citizen is entitled to equal privileges with every other American citizen, and no State can make any law which shall abridge the privileges and immunities of citizens of the United States; why does not "every citizen" according to Mr. Stevens' logic, "have an inevitable conclusion," that every American citizen has a right to establish a bank or a railroad in every State?

Mr. Stevens is himself apparently not quite satisfied with this argument. Perhaps he remembers that it was precisely the argument by which, in the olden time, slaveholders in the South sought to establish their right to hold slaves in all the States and all the Territories of the Union. At any rate, he falls back upon another—one a little more extraordinary than this one:—

"If every citizen of any State," he says, in the course of his argument, "is entitled to all the inalienable rights, privileges, and immunities of this Government, and if one of those inalienable rights is the right to cast his ballot for every man who is to take part in the Government, show me the man who is so impudent as to deny that suffrage by the ballot is due to every man being within its realm to whom God has given intellect."

That is, "if the right to vote is an inalienable right, show me the man impudent enough to deny that it belongs to every human being by whom God has given immortality." So we say. If the one is true, the other must be true also. Yet Mr. Stevens denies it. Women and children are "human beings," and it is supposed that "God has given them immortality." He certainly has, if he has given it to anybody. Yet Mr. Stevens will not permit them to vote. We do not say that he is an "impudent citizen," as he says of all who agree with him in this inconsistency. We only say that he is a very foolish citizen—that he has no clear idea of what he is trying to say—he mixes up common sense and nonsense quite as badly as politics and theology. His pretended argument is no argument at all. He assumes the very point involved, and then, by simply repeating it, considers it proved. If the right to vote is an "inalienable right," recognized as such by the amended Constitution, then of course everybody has a right to vote. But that happens not to be the case. The right to vote is not a natural right, but a political right, and Mr. Stevens must first get that out of the way, if he hopes to prove anything at all.

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